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SOME OF THE RARER SUMMER BLOOMING SHRUBS

The Stewartias. At the Arboretum, the Stewartias started blooming at the end of June this year, though ordinarily they usually bloom a week or two later. They all have flaky, cinnamon-brown trunks, with white Camellia-like flowers. There are three types which can be considered here, namely *Stewartia pentagyna*, *S. pseudocamellia*, and *S. koreana*. The first mentioned is the only one of the group native to this country, found from North Carolina to Florida. It is a shrub or tree-like bush with ovate to oblong-ovate leaves about 2-5 inches long. The cup-shaped flowers are white and about 3-4½ inches across, while the beauty of the individual flowers is considerably augmented by the orange colored anthers. There is a variety, *grandiflora*, which is even more beautiful because of its purple stamens. This is apparently perfectly hardy at the Arboretum and another large plant on the campus at Vassar College at Poughkeepsie, N. Y., suffered no injury there at all during the severe winter several years ago. An added advantage of this plant is that the dark green leaves turn an orange to crimson color in the fall.

The Japanese representative of this group is *Stewartia pseudocamellia*. In Japan, where this plant is quite common around Nikko and in other mountainous regions, Wilson found it rather rare in cultivation and difficult to purchase, for some reason or other. The young plant has ascending branches forming a vase-shaped crown, but older trees become rounded at the top. The flowers are borne singly in the axils of the leaves of the current year's growth and there is a striking similarity between its flowers and those of a Camellia. In the fall, the leaves turn a blackish-purple color.

The Korean Stewartia, *S. koreana*, was first introduced in 1917 by

the Arboretum from seeds collected in Korea. The unfortunate thing about this plant was that it took eleven years before it bloomed, but it is probably the most hardy of the group and certainly the most symmetrical as a small tree. It is upright and pyramidal in shape with the leaves a good dark green color. The edges of the flower petals are slightly fringed and the stamens are a rich yellow.

***Albizzia julibrissin rosea*.** Commonly called the silk tree, this is the most outstanding of the summer blooming shrubs at the Arboretum and has the most finely divided foliage of any of the woody plants hardy in the northern United States. The foliage reminds one of that of the Mimosa or sensitive plant. The native country of this tree may be in doubt, but it is found widespread in Asia from Persia through China to southern Korea, and has been naturalized in the United States from Virginia south to Louisiana. The peculiarity of this plant is that the stamens make the conspicuously showy parts of the flower.

The flowers are borne in stalked heads which are produced many together in the topmost leaf stalks of the current year's growth. The sepals and petals are inconspicuous and dominated by the thread-like, upright, pink stamens. The flowers are borne on the upper side of the branches and stand above the foliage. For this reason, they are very conspicuous, and certainly are different from the flowers of most other hardy woody plants. In the type, the stamens are white and less showy than in the variety *rosea*, and fortunately this variety is also the hardier.

The origin of this particular plant is interesting. Wilson observed it growing near a hotel in central Korea, which was near the northern limit for the plant. Feeling that seed from this tree would do better under Massachusetts conditions than seed of the same variety collected further south, he sent some seed to the Arboretum in 1918. Only a few seeds were collected, and the young seedlings were set out when four years old. Several were killed the first winter, but one came through and has only suffered during the most severe winters since. Each time it is injured, it sprouts again and comes back into good form. One of the best characteristics it has is the long blooming season. Starting in July, it continues to bloom usually well into September. Though rare yet in the trade, this plant is certainly worth a trial in the north where the winters are not too severe, and its unique and interesting flowers will make it one of the most outstanding plants in bloom during the summer.

***Tripterygium Regelii*.** This is one of those few woody plants which can be used either as a vine or as a shrub. Native in Korea and Japan,



A-384

As a bush, *Tripterygium Regelia*.

where it often climbs to the tops of the tallest trees, this plant is valued in this country because of its interesting, creamy-white colored flower spikes in mid June. The individual flowers are small but extremely numerous, and the fruits are bladder-like. This plant is another introduction of the Arnold Arboretum, the seed first being sent to this country by Professor J. G. Jack from Korea in 1905. Though occasionally suffering slight winter injury, it is still a valued plant for summer bloom. It is not classed as a vigorous growing vine, but makes its best show of flowers possibly when treated as a shrub, and could be used considerably more in northern gardens.

Acanthopanax ricinifolius. This is a close relative of the shrubby *Acanthopanax Sieboldianus* (*A. pentaphyllum* in the trade) which does so well as a foliage plant when grown in the shade or against a stone building. The interesting thing about *A. ricinifolius* is that it is a standard tree, occurring wild in Japan often to a height of 80 feet or more. In Korea and central and western China, it is also valued as a timber tree. There is a large tree in the Arboretum apparently perfectly at home. The leaves are large and similar in shape to those of the Castor oil bean (*Ricinus*) from which it gets its name. Each branchlet terminates in a broad, round compound cluster of flowers which are rapidly followed by small, jet-black fruits. The large and handsome palmate leaves give this tree a tropical appearance, yet it is perfectly hardy, quick growing, and apparently thrives in ordinary garden soil.

If a tropical effect is desired, this tree might be an excellent thing to use. It is interesting to know that this plant is the only hardy member of the genus which grows into a tree, and that such an outstanding near relative of the popular *A. Sieboldianus* (*A. pentaphyllum*) is hardy here in the north.

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